

New Englander

Chess Club Update – September 2026

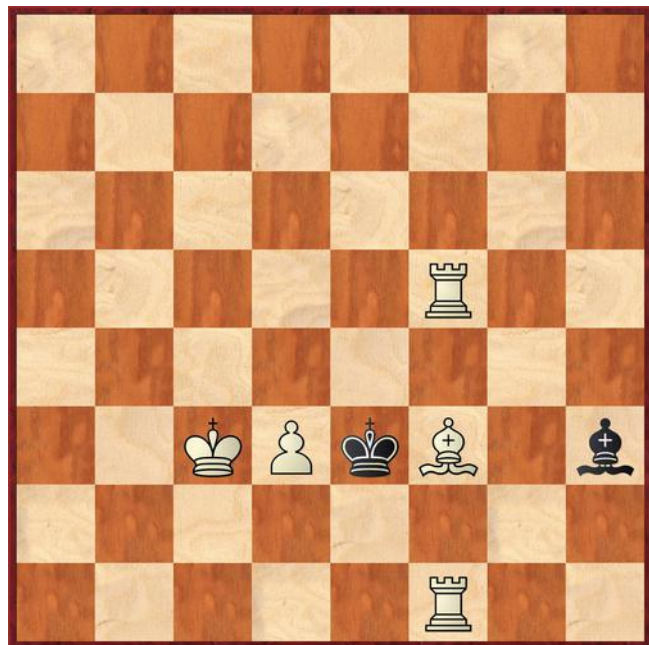
Chairman's Chatter

The Rapidplay competition starts the season on 2nd September. Make a note!

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Dvoretsky v Gulko, Liepaja 1975)

Position : r5nr/pR3p1p/2p5/2kp4/5Qb1/b1P2P2/q5PP/4KB1R

1 Rb5+ cxb5 2 Qc7#

Diary Dates

2nd September Start of new season

27th September [Cambridgeshire Rapidplay](#) at Whittlesford, CB22 4NE starting at 10am. Entry fee £21/15.50 via [online entry](#)

24th October [2026 English Championship](#) until 1st November at Holiday Inn, Thorpe Wood

28-29th November A five-round Swiss event at Christie Hall Wansford for the [County Individual championship](#). Entry £25 (£15 juniors) before 20th November to james1blair@yahoo.co.uk

Website to Watch

The [46th Chess Olympiad](#) will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from 16th to 27th September. About 400 teams are expected to participate in the Open and Women's event. England's men are 13th seeds and

the Women are 19th but field rising star Bodhana Sivanandan on top boards.

Miss of the Month

Recently, I came across a bottle of wine with a fancy label that was called "Nostalgia". It obviously was not as good as it used to be! In chess, established members of the club might look back fondly to the period of almost a decade from 2009 to 2018. In that spell, the dominant team in Division One of the Cambridgeshire was Royston. They were often able to field a team in which their board 5 outranked the opposition board 1 and they typically scored an impressive 80%. Not surprisingly, they won the title every year ... except one.

In 2010-11, New England A, with Chris Ross having an outstanding year on board 1, sneaked in and won the championship on points difference – of necessity avoiding a 5-0 whitewash in a final match decider. However, the following year, they visited us early in the season and we expected a backlash for our temerity. Grading records are not readily available but Paul Kemp's rating was the equivalent of 2122 and he was on board 4!

After a successful season previously, I had reached a rating of 2002 - my peak since my University days - and on board 2, was perhaps the closest to my opponent of any team member. But I still had a massive deficit to overcome.

P Hanks v N Hutchinson

New England A v Royston, 02.11.2011

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nc3	Bb4
4	Qc2	0-0
5	Nf3	d6

In this Classical Variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defence, Black often plays d7-d5 and the play transposes into structures akin to the Queen's Gambit. My opponent decides to try a slower approach. It will give me more time to go wrong.

6	Bg5	Nbd7
7	e3	c5
8	Bd3	h6

These are all routine developing moves that have been seen before e.g. Timoshenko v Kurajica, Istanbul Olympiad 2000 but that game continued 8 ... Qa5. Fritz prefers the text move.

9	Bh4	Re8
10	0-0	Ba5
11	Rad1	cxtd4
12	exd4	

Fritz has been quibbling about Black's choices but only by small fractions of a pawn. The assessment has hardly changed from White's traditional advantage of about 0.5 but here, 12 Nxd4 and 12 Nb5 are favourites. In the long term, they aim to target weaknesses on the d file.

12	...	a6
13	Ne4	Bc7

The alternative is 13 ... g5 14 Nxf6+ Nxf6 15 Bg3. At this point, Fritz is happy that White's advantage is worth a pawn but I find that difficult to see. To discover why in retrospect, I entered a "null move" i.e. Black does nothing on his turn and 16 c5 dxc5 17 dxc5 reveals that the black queen is under threat of a discovered check and has few escape squares. e.g.

- 17 ... Qe7 18 Bd6 Qd8 19 Ne5 and 20 f4 with an overwhelming attack
- 17 ... Bd7 18 Ne5
 - 18 ... Rc8 19 Bh7+ Nxh7 (19 ... Kf8 20 Nxf7) 20 Rxd7
 - 18 ... Rf8 19 Bh7+ Kh8 (19 ... Nxh7 20 Rxd7 Qe8 21 Nxf7) 20 Rxd7 Nxd7 21 Rd1
- 17 ... Nd5 18 Bh7+ Kh8 and now comes the tactical trick 19 Bg6 based on 19 ... fxg6 20 Qxg6 Bc7 (20 ... e5 21 Bxe5+ Rxe5 22 Nxe5 wins the black queen) 21.Bxc7 Qxc7 22 Qxe8+ Kg7 23 Rxd5 exd5 24 Re1.

Obviously, this is postmortem computer analysis but it shows the value of one tempo.

14	Nxf6+
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Fritz is undeterred and continues 14 c5 dxc5 15 dxc5 g5 16 Nxf6+ Qxf6 17 Bg3 Bxg3 18 hxg3 with another evaluation giving me an extra pawn. To me, it just looks like a series of exchanges but the manoeuvre Nf3-d2-e4-d6 adds to the extra space and queenside majority.

14	...	Nxf6
15	b4	Bd7
16	Rfe1	Rc8
17	Nd2	d5
18	c5	e5
19	dxe5	Bxe5

Perhaps, Black could swap off with 19 ... Rxe5 20 Rxe5 Bxe5 21 Nf3 to reduce the forces White can muster for an attack.

20	Bh7+	Kh8
21	Bf5	

White has the right idea but 21 Nf3 would force Black's active bishop to retreat before continuing.

21	...	Qc7
22	Nf3	Bxf5
23	Qxf5	Bc3
24	Rxe8+	Nxe8

After 24 ... Rxe8 which looks more natural, 25 Bxf6 Bxf6 26 Qxd5 gives White superior ending but not one I expect to win against a strong opponent. Did Black overestimate me?

25	Rxd5	Bxb4
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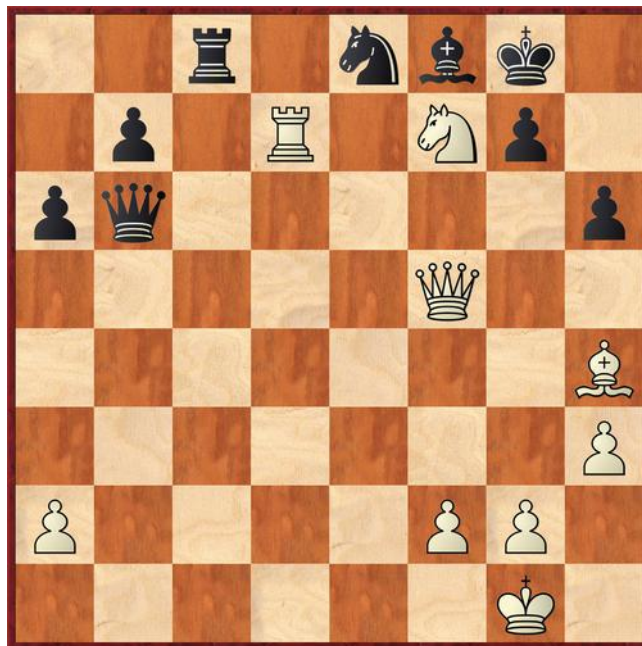
26	Ne5
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The black queen is still short of squares which could be exploited by 26 Bg3 Qc6 (26 ... g6 27 Qh3; 26 ... Qe8 27 Qxc8) 27 Ne5.

26	...	Bxc5
27	Rd7	Qb6
28	Nxf7+	

I need to be careful. 28 Rxf7 is very tempting but 28 ... Bxf2+ 29 Kf1 (29 Qxf2 Rc1#) 29 ... Rc1+ 30 Ke2 Qe3#. I should meet this threat with an aggressive move 28 g4.

28	...	Kg8
29	h3	Bf8



I was thankful to have reached move 30! It looks to be a great position and would have been the stuff of dreams at the start of the game. However, with the clock ticking, I could not see how to proceed and took the coward's way out.

30	Ne5	Nd6
31	Qe6+	Kh7
32	Qg6+	Kg8
33	Qe6+	

33 Ng4 is correct and virtually zugzwang. 33 ... Kh8 34 Bf6 Ne8 35 Bxg7+ wins the queen on b6. If 33 ... Rc1+ 34 Kh2 Qb1 appears double-edged but after 35 Nxh6+ Kh8 36 Nf7+ Nxf7 37 Qxf7, the checks will run out e.g. 37 ... Rh1+ 38 Kg3 Kh7 39 Qxf8 Qg6+ 40 Kf4 or 38 ... Qb4 39 Rd8.

33	...	Kh7
34	Qg6+	1/2-1/2

Can you do better from the diagram? Best is 30 Bd8! The point is to drive the black queen from protecting h6 e.g. 30 ... Qc5 31 Nxh6+ Kh8 32 Nf7+ Kg8 33 Ne5 Nf6 34 Qe6+ Kh8 (34 ... Kh7 35 Qxf6) 35 Ng6+ Kh7 36 Qxf6 and if 30 ... Rxd8 31 Rxd8 Nf6 32 Nxh6+.

Another season is upon us. It's time to make new memories.

Paul Hanks